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The Massachusetts School to Work Initiative

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Build a strategy for Education Reform

Bring classroom learning to life

Make education relevant to student's lives

Educator Action Steps

School to Work: Meeting the Challenge of Education Reform

The Massachusetts School to Work initiative offers vast opportunities for effective school improvement. Teachers, counselors and administrators are pursuing School to Work activities to help fulfill the goals of the Education Reform Act of 1993. Today, educators and employers are joining efforts at unprecedented levels, as Massachusetts creates the schools of the future.

This publication explores the many options open to educators for participating in School to Work.

"School to Work is a tool we must use as we restructure our schools to help young people be prepared for the challenges of the 21st century."

Dr. James L. Garvey
Superintendent of Schools
Worcester

Education Presents a Tool for Success

Nearly all students will work one day -- some right after high school, others after one, two, four or more years of further education or training.

The high school diploma is a means for future success, not an end in itself.

Times have changed

To face these times, we must re-examine some of the traditional values about education, values such as --

- Learning takes place only in a classroom
- School occurs during certain hours of the day, certain days of the week, and certain weeks in the year
- Students have to choose between going to college or going directly to work after graduation
- A four-year college degree guarantees success in the workplace

School to Work connects the classroom to the community by using the entire community as a learning lab. School to Work motivates all types of learners to gain the academic, social and workplace skills needed for their futures.

NOTE: *The names "School to Work" and "School to Career" mean the same thing. People use many different names to describe the current movement of preparing students for a successful future.*

School to Work, School to Career

A vehicle for achieving Education Reform

The Education Reform Act has raised major practical questions. School to Work offers concrete answers -- it is a vehicle to help schools achieve many of the goals of Education Reform.

Professional Development

School to Work should become part of the professional development offerings of all school districts and colleges.

- Teachers can receive work-based training and experience as part of their professional development, certification and recertification plan
- Teachers can intern, job shadow, take summer industry positions to increase their knowledge of the labor market
- Curriculum development can be expanded to focus on applied learning or learning in context
- Integrate career development with all core subjects

Time and Learning Requirements

- Apply students' work-based experience toward Time and Learning requirements
- Education Reform allows greater flexibility in the school day and school year to accommodate School to Work activities

Education Reform and School to Work both emphasize applied learning, interdisciplinary teaching, school restructuring, occupational proficiency and higher academic standards.

School to Work Goals

- Makes education relevant to students
- Creates opportunities for students to apply academic principles while learning skills needed at the workplace
- Provides school-to-work opportunities for postsecondary education students
- Opens the door for entire community to participate in education
- Sets high expectations for students in the classroom, the workplace and the community
- Prepares all students to make informed choices among a full range of postsecondary options
- Offers additional community resources and support for education

"There are very simple things demanded in the workplace that cannot be taught in the classroom setting. School to Work will fill the gap that has always been missing in the education experience."

Sofia Rasher
English Teacher
Brockton High School

"I want to learn something that I can use in my life, not just facts so I can pass some test."

Katie Scott
Newton North High School

What Can You Do?

School to Work offers a host of activities, each creating a positive impact on the student, teacher and employer. Educators can select the most appropriate activities. Your School to Work Local Partnership can help you develop and integrate activities. Local Partnership members include schools, employers, parents and community leaders.

Learn about industry

- Tour area businesses alone, with a class, or with other teachers
- Intern at a local company to earn Professional Development credits
- Take a summer job in an industry relevant to your teaching subject
- Invite appropriate community and business professionals to teach a class
- Let your students know how much you value school-to-work activities
- Learn what students need to know to succeed in the workplace

Increase Student Learning

- Demonstrate the practical context of all class activities
- Design project-based applied-learning curriculum
- Understand how today's knowledge and skill-needs for career success differ from yesterday's needs
- Provide meaningful, relevant course work with clear links to outside world
- Provide students with opportunities to meet with role models or mentors
- Encourage students to explore new interests/careers

To drive change

- Make career development a priority
- Learn about your School to Work Local Partnership and its activities
- Invite your Local Partnership coordinator to make a presentation to school staff during an in-service day
- Invite business people to guest lecture in the classroom and organize field visits.
- Use industry contacts to broaden student learning opportunities

What Can Schools Do?

- Provide professional development opportunities that create activities with career focus
- Open the classroom doors to the community -- parents, business, labor and community organizations
- Provide a more flexible view of the school day and year
- Develop a school-to-work system accessible to all students
- Encourage teacher and student externships, internships and apprenticeships
- Build on current community partnerships with your school
- Meet with employers to learn about what students need to know to work in their business at a variety of levels.
- Offer comprehensive guidance that combines career guidance and postsecondary advising
- Encourage projects and curriculum that use local community examples to contextualize learning
- Build on successful models already in place

"My daughter's level of confidence, her ability to communicate with adults, and her approach to school have improved significantly since her involvement began with School to Work."

Michelle Phillips
Parent
Pittsfield

Industry and Schools Spurred Education Reform

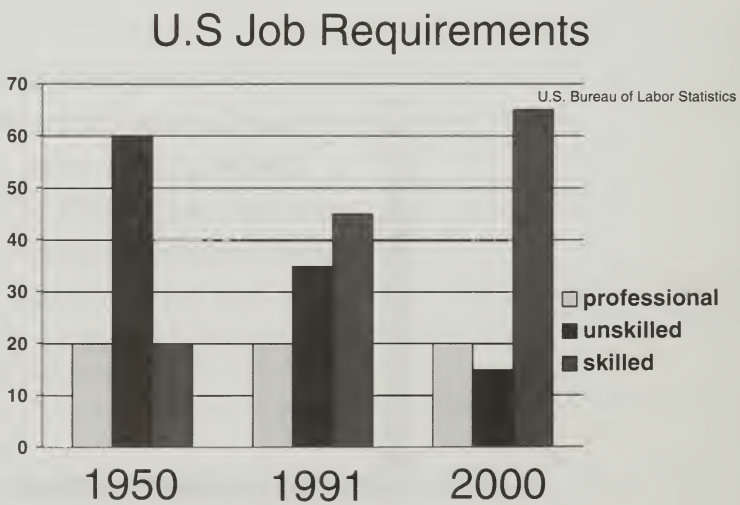
Sustain the Momentum

The strength of an economy relies on the ability of its workforce -- schools are the shapers of tomorrow's workforce.

The U.S. is the only industrialized nation lacking a system to help youth make a smooth transition from school to work. Preparing youth to enter the workforce is more important than reducing taxes, said 82% of 1,000 people who were randomly surveyed nationwide.

Massachusetts employers ranked the education system as a top item that affected their business, along with taxes and general business costs according to a recent survey by the Associated Industries of Massachusetts. Each year industry spends billions of dollars to provide remedial training.

While three-fourths of our students never earn a bachelor degree, the current shortage of skilled workers in this country is partly due to a dramatic change in America's workforce requirements. School to Work seeks to equip the student with the tools needed to succeed in a high-skilled rapidly changing environment.



Career Success Today Demands Higher Education

Goals of a school-to-work system include:

- Increase the number of high school and college graduates
- Design pathways for high school students that seamlessly lead into postsecondary majors
- Provide opportunities to access postsecondary education through alternative programs such as:
  - *Dual Enrollment* - allows students to enroll in postsecondary courses for credit while they are still at the secondary level
  - *2 + 2 + 2 Program Model* - students commit to a long-range career training plan

A link between secondary and higher education is critical because:

- The job outlook for the next decade forecasts a dramatic increase in the number of jobs that will require a postsecondary education
- An increase in years of higher education provides better prospects for economic stability in the workforce

Postsecondary institutions, like community colleges, have worked with high schools to design a continuous sequence of courses that lead to degrees/certificates recognized by industries. In 1995, more than 500 companies entered into training partnerships with one or more of Massachusetts 16 community colleges.

Under Tech Prep, local planning teams of educators from the high school and community colleges work together to develop sequential pathways for students from secondary to postsecondary education.

Often students are unaware of the education needed to succeed in today's careers. Worksite experience -- observing firsthand the career paths of a college diploma -- inspires the pursuit of higher education.

When learning is connected and integrated with the workplace, the value of and student interest in postsecondary education grows immeasurably.

School to Work increases students' ability to plan ahead -- to make sure post-secondary tuition dollars are well spent.

Key Elements of School to Work

Include All Students

Kindergartners to postsecondary students, students with disabilities, gifted students, special education students, students at risk of dropping out, out-of-school youth, college-bound, adult learners, those bound for work, the military or trade school will benefit from School to Work systems.

School-based Learning

The classroom, curriculum and teaching strategies should reflect actual workplace realities. Students will learn about different industries, occupations, and the working world around them at an early age. A school to work system provides: career exploration and counseling; a program of study that meets high academic standards; project-based learning activities based on examples found in the workplace; opportunities for students to select broad career pathways that lead to further education; and career focus preparation for college-bound students.

Work-based Learning

Students generally learn well if they think the lesson is relevant to their lives. Classes become more effective when students connect and apply classroom knowledge to workplace tasks. Work-based learning means structured training and mentoring at job sites. It means learning and practicing basic workplace behaviors, getting to know all aspects of a particular industry, achieving a set of job skills mastered at progressively higher levels and linking those to a chosen career field.

Connecting Activities

Connecting activities build and maintain bridges between school and work. They match students and employers and establish liaisons that connect schools, employers, parents and students. Connecting activities include training teachers, mentors and counselors to assist students and provide guidance as students make decisions about their education and careers.

The Education Reform Act of 1993 challenges educators to address the changes in our world and equip students with tools for success.

Commonly Asked Questions

Is School to Work just for high school students?

- No. School to Work starts the day students enter kindergarten and continues until they make the transition into the world of work.

School to Work seems to be one of many program initiatives currently in Massachusetts. Where does it fit in?

- All current education initiatives are consistent with the goals of Education Reform. Education Reform and School to Work both emphasize professional development, applied learning, interdisciplinary teaching, school restructuring, occupational proficiency, and higher academic standards.

What is meant by "systemic initiative?"

- School to Work seeks to create an environment conducive for change. It is not another program layer, but an initiative to profoundly restructure our efforts at preparing students for their future.

Are employers really committed?

- Yes. But they need to know schools are as well. They are prepared to work with their local schools, but they need to know what you would like them to do.

Incorporating School to Work principles in your classroom will make your job easier, not more cumbersome.

How Can I Start?

Contact Your School to Work Local Partnership.

Massachusetts, under the leadership of the Regional Employment Boards, developed 42 Local Partnerships -- covering the entire map of the Commonwealth. These partnerships implement the School to Work initiatives within their school districts. Partnership members include schools, employers, community organizations, labor, parents, students and other community leaders.

Assabet Valley	508-485-9430
Charles River	617-552-7628
Tri-County	508-528-5400
Blue Hills	617-828-5800
Attleboro Area	508-222-5150 x225
Central Essex	508-740-1212
Fall River	508-636-1140
Cape and Islands	508-362-2131 x4682
North Quabbin	508-249-3849
Boston PIC	617-423-3755
Mystic Valley (metro north)	617-393-2219
Greater New Bedford	508-999-2361
Greater Lynn	617-477-7308
Minuteman Suburban	617-861-6500 x218
Northern Tier (metro north)	617-942-5414
Cape Ann	508-744-8716
Springfield	413-787-7121
Nashoba Valley	508-425-9046
Crossroads 2000 (Haverhill area)	508-374-5700
Blackstone Valley	508-529-7758 x3042
Greater Lowell	508-656-3155
South Middlesex	508-879-5400 x204
Hampshire County	413-586-4900
Franklin County	413-774-2747
Greater Lawrence	508-685-3000
Cranberry (south coastal)	617-340-7142
Western Essex	508-762-0001 x230
Greater Gardner	508-827-5907
Southern Worcester County Alliance	508-987-6050
Greater Brockton	508-588-9100 x1081
Chicopee - Holyoke	413-594-2016
Metropolitan (metro north)	617-228-3292
Lower Pioneer Valley	413-593-5586
Southern Berkshire	413-528-2410
Fitchburg - Leominster	508-345-9200 x226
Westfield - Gateway	413-572-6533
Greater Worcester	508-754-9425
Central Berkshire	413-499-9564
Taunton Area	508-823-5151 x244
Quaboag Valley	413-283-9701
Northern Berkshire	413-663-8667
Greater Newburyport	508-465-4440 x21

RESOURCES:

Massachusetts Office for School to Work Transition
Contact: John Niles (617) 451-5130

Department of Education
Contact: Judith Klimkiewicz (617) 388-3300 x431

The MassJobs Council
Contact: Susan Phillips (617) 727-7944

Associated Industries of Massachusetts
Contact: Andre Mayer (617) 262-1180

Department of Employment & Training
Contact: Paul Lewis (617) 626-5351

University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute
School to Work Training and Technical Assistance
Contact: Christine Karavites (617) 338-0246

Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office
Contact: Theresa Romanovitch (617) 451-5130

"All students make the school to life shift. How well they succeed in this change is what school to work is all about."

John C. Rennie, Chairman
Pacer Systems, Inc., Billerica

Employers Await your Invitation

Hundreds of employers across Massachusetts are teaming with educators to build a school-to-work system. These employers have committed to some of the following:

1. Hire students

- provide part-time, full-time and summer jobs
- hire graduates full-time

2. Support career education

- teach classes, guest lecture, provide mentors for students and teachers, provide job shadowing opportunities, and collaborate with educators in designing programs with career-focus

3. Offer internships

- provide work-based curriculum with detailed training plans
- develop with teachers work activities to complement class activities

4. Drive change

- teach teachers about their industry; provide leadership in the Local Partnerships; recruit other firms

School to Work training prepares students for a life beyond the classroom. It gives young people the practical skills and hands-on experience they need to be productive in the workforce and on the job.
Argeo Paul Cellucci
Lieutenant Governor

A Song for Occupations!

In the labor of engines and trades and
the labor of fields I find developments.
And find the eternal meanings.

Workmen and Workwomen!

Walt Whitman
from "A Song for Occupations", 1855

Produced with the:

Associated Industries of Massachusetts
Department of Education
Department of Employment and Training
Executive Office of Education
Higher Education Coordinating Council
Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office
Massachusetts Office for School to Work Transition
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
MassJobs Council
The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute

"School to Work helps answer the classic question I always hear: 'Why, why why do I have to take this class?' "

—Chichi Azeh, student, Amherst Regional High School

To learn more about **School to Work** *or to get involved, call—*

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